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LETTER DATED 3 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF

In response to your letter dated 14 May 1999 (SPLOS/38), concerning the issue of financing the participation of members from the developing countries in the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, I would like to inform you that the matter was considered at the ninth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, held in New York from 19 to 28 May 1999. In addition to your letter, the Meeting had before it a note by the Secretariat (SPLOS/39) on modalities for establishing a trust fund and examples of trust funds administered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I am pleased to inform you that a number of delegations expressed their support in principle for the establishment of a trust fund to be administered by the Secretary-General which should be used to meet the travel and accommodation expenses of members of the Commission from developing countries during periods when they performed their duties as members of the Commission. There was a general understanding that such a trust fund would be financed on the basis of voluntary contributions and that the most appropriate way to proceed would be for the Meeting of States Parties to address a recommendation to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General. It was also noted that the prospective trust fund should be administered in such a way as not to affect the independence of the Commission and its members.

As a result of the discussion, it was concluded that, in order to formulate any recommendations, the Meeting needs from the Commission detailed factual information in writing regarding actual needs and financial estimates for each session and that without that information it would be difficult to take any action.

In the light of the above, I would kindly request you to provide such information so as to enable the tenth Meeting of States Parties (22-26 May 2000) to consider the request of the Commission and to take appropriate action.

I would also like to inform you that several delegations at the ninth Meeting expressed their wish to be apprised of the activities of the Commission. Therefore, I would kindly suggest that you might wish to consider forwarding your statements on the work of the Commission to the attention of the Meetings of States Parties.

(Signed) Peter Tomka
President of the ninth Meeting of
States Parties to the United Nations
Convention on the Law of the Sea